

MARY AND THE INFANT JESUS.

CHRISTMAS AMONG MICHIGAN WOODSMEN

MONG English speaking people there can be found no more quaint observance of the season than that in vogue among the woodsmen of northern Michigan Throughout this great timber belt there are thousands of men employed, and a large proportion of them see the outside world but once or twice a year when they journey to Sault Ste. Marie or other nearby towns to make purchases of the season's clothing.

Throughout this great wooded district two thirds of the men are Canadians, many of them devotedly religious, and Christmas among them begins, properly speaking, the 20th of December. However, these men perform



ALL BEGIN A MARCH AROUND.

their usual labors until the 24th day of the month, and then the festivities begin in earnest.

During the four days preceding the celebration, however, it must be understood that the work is not so strenuous, and the monotonous buzz of the saw and the ring of the ax are frequent ly interrupted by merry bursts of song and anecdotes of those who have passed

ed away during the previous season. In Chippewa county there are many camps or settlements, each controlled by a recognized leader, and long before the bolidays the point of celebration is decided upon By Christmas eve the men, women and children have all assembled at the chosen camp, where elaborate preparations have been mad for their comfort, and at 10 o'clock in the morning of that day the duly elect ed master of ceremonies addresses the multitude of people assembled and outlines the program of the week to fol low, for these celebrations continue to the 31st day of December.

After his speech the oldest daughter of the oldest resident is elected queen of the holidays. Her corps of as distants is quickly chosen from the ed-

ucated classes, and from their decisions pertaining to the week's celebration there an be no appeal. During the remainder of the day many speeches are given, refreshments of many kinds are served, and family groups flock together and relate their own folklore, while the queen, assisted by her advisers, examines and selects the various fowls to be served on the following and subsequent days.

Christmas day is but an hour old when all assemble and indulge in religious services, while the pine knots, flaring and spluttering in the night air, add a beautiful and weird aspect to the scene. At sunrise all the men, wo men and children, arrayed in their best, assemble at a prearranged spot and form a large circle, the women generally in plain woolen garments and the men in high topped spiked shoes and dark flannel shirts.

In the center of the group stand the husbandmen, or slayers of the fowls. waiting. A grindstone and six men three to grind the axes and three assistants, are also in the center of the group. At a prearranged signal all the people begin a warch around, singing and dancing; the grindstones are put in motion, the axes are laid upon them and the celebration is on in earnest The singing, dancing and countermarching are continued until the axes have attained a keen edge, when all heads are uncovered, while a dozen men hand up the fowls for decapita tion. The women take the slain fowls in charge, and soon they are prepared for the earth ovens.

Feasting, drinking and denoing ther continue until the last day of the year, when all depart to their various camps.



"SKATES FOR ME," SAYS SUSIE.

The Judge's White Gloves.

In the olden days judges were forbidden to wear gloves on the bench for fear of bribes being dropped into them. If there were no cases to be tried, however, there was no opportunity for bribing, and the sheriffs might give the judge a pair of gloves; hence the custom of presenting a judge with a pair of white gloves when he has no cases to try at an assizes.

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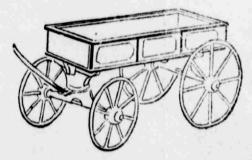


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